

Date: October 28, 2003

To: Federal Communications Commission
From: Paul J. Kolacki-K2FX
Re: RM-10811

Dear Federal Communications Commission,

I fully support the proposed rulemaking under RM-10811. As a Volunteer Examiner, all too often I see candidates for Amateur Radio Licenses be awarded licenses based on tests and CW requirements that are clearly inadequate. The FISTS organization clearly reminds us that Amateur radio is first and foremost a public service, and not just a hobby. It requires technical training, and commitment. I really do not care about the number of licensed operators we have in this country, but I do care about having operators who are highly qualified to fill their public service roles in times of emergency. CW is by far that most reliable means of transmission when it comes to HF communications, especially in times of poor propagation. Reducing the CW requirement from 20 WPM to just 5 WPM was one of the worst things you could have done. Not to mention, it is a slap in the face to operators such as myself who actually worked for the privileges we now have. Administering tests that have all of the answers pre-printed is not really much of a test at all is it? Whatever happened to having to learn some good amounts of electronic theory to earn a license? That's why hams in past years were so well regarded for their knowledge and ability to find ways to communicate effectively. The same can't be said today. If you refuse to re-instate 20 WPM as a requirement for an Extra Class license as I think it should be, then at least please consider the 12 WPM proposed by FISTS. It is something that can only benefit this great public service. What happens when an operator one day is put into a situation where the signal they are receiving could be part of a life or death situation, and it comes in the form of CW? Is the receiving operator going to ask the sending station to slow down to just 5 WPM because that is all they can copy (when time is of the essence), or will they ask for a multiple choice test at the end of the transmission to fill in the holes they could not copy? Sounds pretty crazy doesn't it, yet this is the way we test new operators. Enough is enough. Lets start to see a return to higher standards in this service, and not continue down the pathway of dumbing down that we have seen for years now.